

“*Queer Judaism* refuses simple narratives that pit queer lives against religion. Instead, it beautifully examines how LGBT activists in Israel work within Orthodox Judaism to give their lives and identities meaning, even as they struggle within this tradition to make space for themselves. Avishai’s brilliant, moving ethnography sets a new standard for scholarship in religion and sexuality. It’s a must read.”

—ANTHONY PETRO, author of *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion*

“An engaging book about people whose proud, public existence became possible over a very short time. Pushing beyond old notions of reconciling conflicting identities, Avishai illustrates how actors gently seized a political and cultural moment and organized to articulate the meaning their lives derived from existing at the intersection of orthodox religion and ‘unorthodox’ sexuality. Ultimately, *Queer Judaism* is a story of how queerness can foster life and growth in institutions, culture, and individuals—and its limits.”

—DAWNE MOON, author of *God, Sex, and Politics: Homosexuality and Everyday Theologies*

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Until recently, Orthodox people in Israel could not imagine embracing their LGBT sexual or gender identity and staying within the Orthodox fold. But within the span of about a decade and a half, Orthodox LGBT people have forged social circles and communities and become much more visible. This has been a remarkable shift in a relatively short time span. *Queer Judaism* offers the compelling story of how Jewish LGBT persons in Israel created an effective social movement.

Drawing on more than 120 interviews, Orit Avishai illustrates how LGBT Jews accomplished this radical change. She makes the case that it has taken multiple approaches to achieve recognition within the community, ranging from political activism to more personal interactions with religious leaders and community members, to simply creating spaces to go about their everyday lives. Orthodox LGBT Jews have drawn from their lived experiences as well as Jewish traditions, symbols, and mythologies to build this movement, motivated to embrace their sexual identity not in spite of, but rather because of, their commitment to Jewish scripture, tradition, and way of life. Unique and timely, *Queer Judaism* challenges popular conceptions of how LGBT people interact and identify with conservative communities of faith.

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